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Review of *The Land of Prehistory: A Critical History of American Archaeology* by Alice Beck Kehoe

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The Land of Prehistory: A Critical History of American Archaeology. Alice Beck Kehoe. New York: Routledge Publishing Company, 1998. xiv+288 pp. Notes, references, index. \$80.00 cloth (ISBN 0-415-92054-X), \$22.99 paper (ISBN 0-415-92055-8).

The Land of Prehistory is a comprehensive—indeed, encyclopedic—and insightful introduction to the history of Americanist archaeology. Well written and comprehensible to both lay and professional readers, it traces North American archaeology from its European foundations through such contemporary themes as the new archaeology, postmodernism, and NAGPRA (though, curiously, only paying lip service to gender studies). It will be a useful, if often controversial, textbook for courses in introductory archaeology, the history of archaeology, and for seminars in archaeological method and history.

It is impossible to deal adequately with the volume's richness of detail: bare listings must suffice where a review article would be far more appropriate. Chapter 1 begins with the pre-Darwinian foundations of archaeology, and the next two chapters focus on Daniel Wilson's early model of prehistory as a prelude to explicating American prehistory, the subject of chapter 4. In chapter 5 the positivists of the new American frontier lead us on to the new archaeology, its philosophy, and weaknesses, the subjects of chapters 6 through 8. It is unfortunate that chapter 9, on how mainstream archaeologists dealt with Cahokia, ends with speculation out of character with the book's rigor. Chapter 10 is a review of Louis Henry Morgan's impact on American anthropology; chapter 11 focuses on the refusal of Americanists to accept contacts across salt water despite compelling evidence to the contrary. The final chapter offers perspectives on a wide variety of current themes and problems.

The book is appropriately subtitled *A Critical History of American Archaeology*. Kehoe's "historical mindedness," however, may well be challenged: in the volume's opening paragraph she declares that "American archaeology has been politically charged" by practitioners who were steeped in bias. Such platitudes are basic to historians and, for that matter, all other social scientists, and their tiresome repetition violates the premise that the past must be judged for itself—and not by contemporary standards.

This aside, Kehoe's monograph provides us with new and expanded perspectives on the history of Americanist archaeology and is one that every prehistorian should read. Highly critical of the contributions of the professional elite, Kehoe nevertheless embeds the story of the developing discipline in a thoughtful, in-depth, and sweeping panorama of contemporary social and political history unparalleled in other such overviews. **W. Raymond Wood**, *Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri-Columbia*.